Author's response to reviews

Title: Involving deprived communities in improving the quality of primary care services: does participatory action research work?

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Author's response to reviews: see over
Dear Editor

We are happy to respond to the points raised by the reviewers, and have made changes to the manuscript accordingly, as detailed below. We have also restructured the format abstract, text, and references to accord with the journal’s requirement.

In response to reviewer 1 (Scott Murray) who suggested minor discretionary revisions we have amended the discussion in line with first suggested discretionary revision relating to dissemination of findings, and we have added the suggested reference by Murray et al 1994 (last paragraph page 21). We have also added the findings of Brown, Lloyd, and Murray (2006) to the discussion (bottom of page 22, start of page 23) and added that reference too.

We have not directly responded to the request for bullet points regarding PAR and change, but we have included a new section regarding this issue, in response to reviewer 2 (see new section of bullet points, top of page 22).

In response to reviewer 3 (Steve Liffe), who requested major and minor essential revisions we have added a comparison of the methods used with other methods in whole systems research as requested and have further justified our use of the methodologies (bottom of page 17, top of page 18) and inserted the new references. We have also responded to the second point about staff attitudes to changes, we have added a new section explaining this in more detail (new section of bullet points, top of page 22). We have also responded to the minor revision requested about social distance by inserting more comment about this (second paragraph, page 23) and adding a new reference.

In response to reviewer 2 (Robin Kearns) who suggested essential minor revisions, we have changed the heading of the findings section to ‘results’ and have restructured the abstract according to the structure asked by the journal. The rest of the paper also complies with the structure required by the journal. We do not know how we can ‘more firmly embed’ our illustrative quotes into the text, as they are already embedded in the text in the appropriate places. We also do not know understand why the paper is considered fragmented, and this point was not raised by other reviewers – indeed both commented on the paper as being well and clearly written. The discussion on the theory of community is in our view an appropriate part of the discussion, because we use it directly in the context of our findings. However, it perhaps does not need the title of ‘theoretical considerations’ and have thus deleted this and included the section under strengths and weaknesses (page 18). It should be noted that the theoretical issues of community are also included in the methods section already (page 8). We feel it is important to point out to the reader that the ‘researcher’ (actually, only one of the researchers) was an academic GP, working in the community and was part of a collaboration with local community members (the research team). We already discuss this issue in detail on page 18, paragraph two.

We do hope these changes are acceptable and that our paper will now be accepted. We look forward to hearing from you,
Yours sincerely

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